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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/506,489	02/18/2000	Hiroaki Miura	040679/1012	8527

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EXAMINER

PIERCE, JEREMY R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1771	15

DATE MAILED: 01/02/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/506,489	MIURA ET AL.
	Examiner Jeremy R. Pierce	Art Unit 1771

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 December 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 3-7,13 and 14 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 3-7,13 and 14 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Prosecution Application

1. The request filed on December 20, 2002 for a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) under 37 CFR 1.53(d) based on parent Application No. 09/506,489 is acceptable and a CPA has been established. An action on the CPA follows.

Response to Amendment

2. Amendment B, filed on December 20, 2002 has been entered as Paper No. 14. Claims 1, 2, and 8-12 have been cancelled. Claims 3-7, 13, and 14 are now pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
4. Claims 3-7, 13, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 3 and 13 recite "fourth polyester fiber (E)." However, there is no third polyester fiber preceding the "fourth polyester fiber." This is somewhat confusing. Further, claim 4 recites "fifth polyester fiber (D)," even though it is the fourth type of polyester fiber mentioned in the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

6. Claims 3-5, 7, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Van Kerrebrouck (U.S. Patent No. 6,066,388).

Van Kerrebrouck discloses a nonwoven comprising an inner fibrous layer and two outer fibrous layers (Abstract). For the purposes of this rejection, the limitations of Applicant's "sound absorbing layer" are met by Van Kerrebrouck's outer layer, while the limitations of Applicant's "moldable layer" are met by Van Kerrebrouck's inner layer. The outer layer comprises higher melting point constructive fibers having a decitex between 0.5 and 28 and lower melting point binder fibers having a decitex between 0.5 and 28 (column 3, lines 36-53). The inner layer comprises higher melting point constructive fibers having a decitex between 3 and 100 and lower melting point binder fibers having a decitex between 3 and 100. Preferably, all fibers are polyester (column

3, line 58). With regard to claim 7, the inner layer may represent between 20 and 90% of the entire nonwoven.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 3-7, 13, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Kerrebrouck in view of Matsukawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,554,831).

For the purposes of this rejection, Van Kerrebrouck's inner layer meets the limitations of Applicant's "sound absorbing layer", while the limitations of Applicant's "moldable layer" are met by Van Kerrebrouck's outer layer for similar reasons set forth above in section 6. However, Van Kerrebrouck does not disclose the inner layer to contain a first polyester fiber having a size smaller than 1 denier. Matsukawa et al. disclose using fibers of less than 4 denier, preferably less than 2 denier in the internal trim member of an automobile headliner to increase sound absorption performance (column 1, line 63 –column 2, line 6). Although Matsukawa et al. fail to directly disclose the fibers to be less than 1 denier, Matsukawa et al. suggest to one skilled in the art to employ as fine a fiber that is possible, making it obvious to a person skilled in the art to use polyester fibers with a fineness less than 1 denier. It would have been obvious to

one having ordinary skill in the art to use fibers less than 1 denier in thickness in order to increase the sound absorbing capabilities of the inner layer of the nonwoven of Van Kerrebrouck, as taught by Matsukawa et al., since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeremy R. Pierce whose telephone number is (703) 605-4243. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7-4:30 and alternate Fridays 7-4.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on (703) 308-2414. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.



Jeremy R. Pierce
Examiner
Art Unit 1771
December 26, 2002



TERREL MORRIS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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